

Jenny Never Gives Up!

Since 2012 Jenny has participated in the LA Cancer Challenge, supported 3rd Party fundraising events and went on to run in the LA Marathon on the Hirshberg Training Team. Jenny's Wonder Woman cape, at the LACC, uniquely honors the memories of her community's loved ones and demonstrates the importance of never giving up for the ones we love!

LACC Team Spotlight – Team Queen Linda

By Kristin Snowden

I have been a LACC team captain for Team Queen Linda for the past three years after my mom lost a four-month-battle with pancreatic cancer on March 22, 2009. My mother, Linda Corwin, was a loving, beautiful, talented, and vivacious 55-year-old who seemed to be the picture of health when she went to the doctor to investigate an annoying and painful side-ache. After a few months of misdiagnoses, a random ER ultrasound tech found a tumor on her pancreas and she was soon diagnosed with stage four pancreatic cancer. No real treatment options. Three to six months to live. Determined to see her son graduate college and her grandchildren grow up, Linda opted for destructive chemotherapy treatments for three months but succumbed to the disease. Her family and friends are still devastated by her absence in their lives.

I formed Team Queen Linda after her horrific experience with

pancreatic cancer because I realized how desperately the statistics needed to improve for this particular cancer. Pancreatic cancer has the absolute WORST survival rate of all cancers and it is in DESPERATE NEED of more funding and research. It lacks any kind of early detection and is often only found when it is too far advanced to treat. Pancreatic cancer tumors also tend to be difficult to penetrate and are often unaltered by current forms of chemo-therapy. As a consequence, chances of surviving the disease are still at 3-5%—one of the only cancers with survival odds still in the single digits.

Immediately after my mom's death the only "productive" and therapeutic thing I could think of doing was to continue my mom's fight by raising funds to improve the pathetic odds of pancreatic cancer. I clung to this once-a-year fundraiser event like a lifeline. Through emailing my friends and family and posting my team website link regularly on my Facebook site, Team Queen Linda has proudly been in the top ten teams for fundraising and team size every year since its inception. I, along with many other family members and teammates, have grown to love those working for the Hirshberg Foundation. We are deeply appreciative of their efforts to end this frightening disease. I whole-heartedly believe in what this Foundation does, how they spend their money, and their ability to make a difference with the private donations they are given.

One of my ultimate goals with the LACC is to eventually have as many teams present that are created for survivors as there are teams created in one's memory. Right now the numbers are skewed too much on the "in memoriam" side. I want to see hundreds of survivors at that event proudly declaring that they've beat this horrible disease. Team Queen Linda is dedicated and passionate about turning the odds around.

LACC Team Spotlight – Allen's Army

By Kevin Powell

My stepdad was diagnosed with Stage IV pancreatic cancer in June 2010. There were no clear symptoms other than the fact that he was not feeling well and was experiencing weight loss. The doctors had initially thought it was pancreatitis, but after living with these random symptoms for four to five months, he finally received his diagnosis—pancreatic cancer. And now he is fighting the fight of his life.

I grew up in California, but my parents divorced when I was in the 3rd grade. Fifteen years ago, my mom moved to Florida, where she eventually met my step-dad. They have been together ever since. I have so much joy knowing that my mom is so happy. I can also say that my step-dad and I have developed a father-son relationship over the past eleven years. He enjoys sharing stories with us about being a retired Master Sergeant where he served as a Paratrooper in the army. Now I find it funny that he has a fear of flying to LA to visit me! It is difficult knowing my step-dad is enduring his treatment in another state, but we make it a special occasion to talk on a regular basis.

Through my step-dad's diagnosis, our family has grown to understand that every moment and holiday we celebrate and share together is so special! My wedding date was in September 2010, only a few months after my step-dad's diagnosis. I remember how much it meant to my step-dad that he was able to be at my wedding. Even though he wasn't able to stand as my best man – he

had started his exhaustive chemotherapy and radiation treatment at the Mayo Clinic in Florida, which caused him to lose 70-80 pounds – he was still present and that meant so much to all of us. My family was also able to come together to have a big party in a hall to celebrate my step-dad and mom's 60th birthdays...those are the times that create memories and remind me that life is so precious.

My step-dad is a great man—a man who inspires me.

I was introduced to the Hirshberg Foundation through JR286 and Agron, clients of my employer, Union Bank. Thanks to Jon Hirshberg, the son of Ron Hirshberg, I ran my first LA Cancer Challenge (LACC) in 2004 with Union Bank, who was one of the event sponsors. I am proud to say that I have continued the commitment that Union Bank established with the LACC in 2004. Little did I know then that six years later I would be running the LA Cancer Challenge while truly understanding what it meant to raise money for a loved one touched by pancreatic cancer. In 2011 I decided to put a team together in honor of my step-dad. We named our team Allen's Army. Not only was my step-dad a fighter in the army, but he is currently in the toughest battle of his life against this disease. In only three weeks, I put a team together in Los Angeles and my mom and step-dad put a team together in Florida. Those two groups, made up of more than 40 supporters, were set to walk at the same time on the east coast and the west coast. We even had family friends set their clock on their cruise to Spain – they hopped on a treadmill at 9am LA time and ran a 5K. We were running together across the world for one cause – to honor a great man, Allen. This year Allen's Army raised close to \$4000.00 and I placed third in my age division!!!! The event really touches all those that participate, both near and far. It is an event that has heart! One aspect of the event that is so special is the fact that the shot-gun starters for each run share their own personal stories.

What struck me most was the way that every person there has a commonality. Whether it was a poster, balloon, or a t-shirt, we were striving to achieve the same active goal in the battle against pancreatic cancer. As I said earlier, it is hard to have my step-dad fighting his battle across the country. I appreciate that the LA Cancer Challenge offers me the opportunity to participate as an active step in raising money and awareness so that research can be done for an early detection method and for the cure.

I will say it again: my step-dad inspires me. His will to press on while living with pancreatic cancer is amazing. I am proud to call him my step-dad!

We Will Never Give Up for Pedro!

Pedro's story is an inspirational one. In addition to fighting the disease himself, he offered guidance to others and shared his story. The Motonishi family created the LA Cancer Challenge team "Run for Pedro" to raise money for research and to come together as a family and show their commitment to never give up!

LACC Team Spotlight – Team MQ

Among the crowd of participants in last October's FILA City Challenge 5k/10k Run benefiting the Hirshberg Foundation were people, and a pooch, wearing t-shirts with the bold purple logo "Team MQ." This eager group was present to support runner Monique Lewis, a pancreatic cancer survivor who was diagnosed in December 1996. After doctors discovered a tumor in the head of her pancreas, they gave her from three to six months to live.

Team MQ was the brainchild of Monique's husband, Austin. When the couple, who live in the San Francisco area, decided to participate in the FILA City Challenge last October in Los Angeles, Austin contacted a number of friends and family. According to Monique, "He asked them to send a card of encouragement to me for race day. People then asked if they could give money. He said yes and the money started coming in."

Monique says she didn't know anything about Team MQ until she arrived in L.A. for the race. Monique explains, "Austin had t-shirts and hats made up for my family and friends. He presented me with the cards, money, t-shirts and hats the day before the race. Needless to say, I was overwhelmed by it all." Team MQ raised almost \$4,000 for the Hirshberg Foundation, all of which will benefit pancreatic cancer research at UCLA. In addition, Monique won the FILA City Challenge Grand Prize, two roundtrip tickets on Southwest Airlines, for turning in the most pledge money.

Monique claims she is "doing well" despite the fact that she has "tons of cancer." Lewis focuses on staying healthy while on chemotherapy and while participating in an experimental drug trial. "I try and eat right, exercise and eat chocolate, daily. I know how lucky I am to have lasted this long. I've had so many bad scans where doctors tell me it's all over that I've stopped

asking what the doctors think. I just live day to day.” Runners can expect to see more purple t-shirts this October 8th at the 2000 FILA City Challenge. Monique remains positive, saying, “We plan to be there next year too.”

Angela Never Gives Up!

In honor of her parents and grandmother, Angela found the motivation to reach her fundraising goal and complete the FILA Challenge 5k/10k. Her letter clearly made an impact on her community because she raised over \$3,300 worth of pledges! She successfully met her goals, paid tribute to her family, and put one foot in front of the other to finish the race., demonstrating her commitment to never give up!